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## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, who renews our strength and guides us along right paths, we honor Your Name. We do not fear what the future may bring, for You are close beside us.

Send our Senators forth today to do right as You give them the ability to see it. May their deeds fit their words and their conduct match their profession. By Your sustaining grace, may their hearts be steadied and stilled, purged of self and filled with Your peace and poise.

As Memorial Day nears, we pause to thank You for those who gave their lives that this Nation might live.

And, Lord, today we thank You for the more than four decades of service on Capitol Hill by Ruby Paone. We are grateful for the joy she has brought to our lives. As she prepares to leave us, bless her more than she can ask or imagine.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, after 2 days of needless delay from across the aisle, this morning we will vote to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the National Defense Authorization Act and hopefully adopt that motion quickly thereafter.

This critical defense bill passed committee on a strong bipartisan basis; there is no reason for further delay from our Democratic colleagues. The National Defense Authorization Act authorizes funds and sets our policy for our military annually. It is always an important bill. It is especially important today.

Consider the multitude of threats facing us from nearly every corner of the world. Consider the need to start preparing our armed services for the many global threats the next President will be forced to confront.

As I have noted before, some of the most senior national security officials within this administration—such as Secretary of Defense Carter and General Dunford or those recently retired from service, such as retired General Campbell—have spoken of the need to better position the next President in theaters from Afghanistan to Asia to Libya.

So whoever that President is, regardless of party, we should take action now to help our next Commander in Chief in this year of transition. That is what this defense legislation before the Senate will help us do.

No. 1, it will support our allies and partners, authorizing funds to combat ISIL, preserve gains in Afghanistan, increase readiness at NATO, and assist friends like Ukraine.

No. 2, it will enhance military readiness, providing more of the equipment, training, and resources our servicemembers need.

No. 3, it will help keep our country safe, getting us better prepared to confront emerging threats like cyber war-

fare, terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Critically, this bill will also honor our commitment to servicemembers, their families, and veterans, authorizing raises, supporting Wounded Warriors, and delivering better health care and benefits for the men and women who stand on guard for us every single day.

This bill contains sweeping reforms designed to advance American innovation and preserve our military's technological edge. The funding level it authorizes is the same as what President Obama requested in his budget.

As I said earlier, it passed the Armed Services Committee on a strong bipartisan vote, 23 to 3, including every single Democrat on the committee. The Armed Services chairman, Senator MCCAIN, knows what it means to serve. He is always on guard for the men and women of our military. This bill is a reflection of his commitment. It is a commitment to them, and it is a commitment to every American—to preparing our country in this year of transition for both the threats we face today and the threats yet to emerge.

### OBAMACARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last week Senators came to the floor to highlight the continuing broken promises of ObamaCare. We did so in the shadow of proposed double-digit ObamaCare premium increases in States across our country, everywhere from Tennessee, to Oregon, to New Hampshire.

Americans have gotten further bad news since, including ObamaCare premium spikes that could reach as high as 83 percent in New Mexico. Each day seems to bring more and more troubling news, which could mean heartbreak for even more Americans. Take, for instance, some headlines from just last night:

“Most Arkansas insurers propose double-digit hikes for 2017.”

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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